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THE UNBORN

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Horror/Mystery/Thriller

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Let the **SUPREME POWER** guard you

Let the **SUPREME LIGHT** guide you

Let the **SUPREME LOVE** envelop you

Also by Harry Raphel Thuruthipuram

The Unfathomable (2017)

The Serein (2019)

1

Death is the ultimate truth. Rajeev thought. Death is certain and that's what people know. People know very little about life but they live passionately each day to explore its possibilities. They survive each day to die some another day. They fear death even though they know it is inevitable. They fear what they don't understand. They don't know when death would appear in front of them with its sharp fangs and obscurity. They fear god, demons and death because they are all unexplainable. Death is the most powerful truth known to man yet unknown of its distinctiveness. The eternal truth! The truth more powerful than life itself. The truth no one wants to accept. Death completes life.

He came back here to die. He survived enough without any meaning for his existence. He decided he could decide his future. He could not fix his time of death but he was sure tonight would be the last page of his life. The place was set. What he doesn't know was he must see the next morning.

It was a day in the cold December month.

The time was way past dusk.

Rajeev and Naanu reached in front of an old house. They kept the luggage in front of the Tulsi - *holy basil plant* altar.

Naanu turned back to leave. Then after thinking about something he turned again to Rajeev. With a hesitation he asked him. "Are you sure you want to stay here for the night?" His oily black hair shook with each word he spoke. He was a short man, hardly above five feet high. He had a

thick moustache neatly cut. He was in his twenties and was energetic like a race horse.

Rajeev gave a demanding look. Naanu didn't see that. Rajeev asked him for the reason. "Why did you ask?"

Naanu looked around to be sure that no one is watching them or hearing them. Then he walked closer to him and with utmost caution he revealed that secret.

"There is a ghost roaming around in these parts."

Rajeev laughed. "How do you know? You are in this village for a few days now." *I would be happy if a ghost could kill me. At least I don't have to take any trouble.*

Naanu was waiting for Rajeev when he came to the village. It was few kilometers walk from the bus stop to that old house. The last bus to the village was at 6.30pm. By the time Rajeev reached the village bus stop the bus was already gone. They had to walk back as Naanu expected they would be able to catch the last bus. He cursed himself for not coming by a motorcycle. While they were walking, Naanu told him that he came here five or six days back. Naanu was an assistant, a new recruit for an advertising company. Rajeev was promoted by the company as chief operations manager of that district. This village came under his authority and he decided to stay in that old house.

Rajeev didn't talked much while they were walking. He was trying to evoke the village in his eyes. He was filling the air in his heart. He smelled the evening air. He felt the cool breeze caressing his hair and face. Naanu felt that Rajeev has lived here in this village before.

"Everyone in this village knows that. They warned me not to go alone at night. I thought the villagers didn't like me and wanted to get rid of me with ghost stories. Obviously I didn't believe their nonsense. One night I even saw her; that was the second day of my arrival. I was walking through this

path and I saw a woman wearing white sari. I couldn't see her face. I paced quickly and reached behind her. I wanted to know who she was. Suddenly she vanished. I was afraid. I knew the stories of the ghost were true. I ran as fast as I could. Last thing I remember was I hit somewhere and fell. When I opened my eyes it was dawn and many people were around me asking what happened."

He stopped telling his story. Rajeev was staring at him. It was getting darker. The nights here are really longer and darker in winter.

A twinkle appeared in between his lips.

"Sir." Naanu again said. "I am living alone. You can stay at my place tonight. Besides this house was unoccupied in years and is not cleaned yet." Naanu missed his family, his lovely wife. He got married a few months ago. His wife is staying with her parents hundred kilometers away from this village. Ever since he saw the ghost he was afraid to live alone but he was left with no other choice.

Rajeev thought that Naanu was too young to get married. "No. I will manage." His voice was stubborn. Naanu looked at him in disbelief. But the darkness was too obscure he couldn't see the emotions of his face. *This is the perfect place to end my story.*

"This is my number." He gave his cell number. "Call me anytime if you need me. I will be here within minutes."

"Okay, Naanu can leave. Thank you for your help."

"This was your house, right." Naanu remembered that this man specifically mentioned this home to say. *He should have been here.* He took a mental note to know more about him and this house in the coming days.

Rajeev didn't answer. He opened his bag and took out a cigarette from its packet. He lighted it and looked at Naanu's direction. "Do you smoke?"

He already was walking and reached a few steps afar. A torch in his hand gave him light in front of him. He looked back in between.

Rajeev watched him till the light of the torch disappeared in front of him.

Night thickened again.

Rajeev looked at that old house.

The house where Mridula was born. The house where she grew up.

It was an old house with brick layered roofing. The roofing was covered with moss, vines and small plants. A small verandah extending from both sides from two central concrete pillars stood between him and the wooden front door in the front.

Rajeev stood there and finished his cigarette. He could feel the cold and dark eyes of the night staring at him. Whether he was welcomed or not, he was yet to find out.

He slowly strode towards the house with his luggage. He kept his right foot on the first step. At the same time he heard a big sound on the western side of the house. A branch of a tree fell down with a heavy thud.

I like the way you are welcoming me. His eyes lit up.

Rajeev was still smiling. He kept his foot on the second step. From the east he heard a whoosh. It was getting stronger and he knew it was a storm.

He stepped on the third step. Like stones falling from the sky big drops of cloudburst plummeted down.

Rajeev didn't mind that. He walked onto the verandah. Wind and rain reached its full strength. It seemed like the nature has went crazy. Rajeev hesitated for a second. It was more than he anticipated. It seemed like he has nothing to do, everything was already been taken care of.

He kept his luggage there and moved towards his right. He searched for something on the wall in the dark. His hands found the switch board.

He turned on the switch. Verandah was aglow with light. Rain and storm stopped as if it never happened.

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The whole village came running. They were all worried and scared. From afar they saw, light in that house.

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2

Rajeev opened the front door. With some creak the panels moved inside. An ancient foul stink came out. It was unbearable but Rajeev seemed unmoved by it. He cleared the cobwebs with a broom and took his baggage inside. Then he locked the door. He walked towards the bedroom and saw a bed in the corner of the room. He walked towards the bed and stared for almost like an eternity. A lot of memories and emotions went through his heart. It was covered with thick layers of dust. The sheet was unwrinkled. He lay on the bed. It had a scent of a lady. Everything around unhurriedly faded away. He was surrounded by the vastness of void and a fragrance which froze his memories to a single point. Slowly he went into a mild slumber.

“You came.” He heard a very soft voice. He felt that it came from deep inside a cave. He wished to respond but was incapable to speak.

He knew that a smooth hand was caressing his chest, warm breath patting his cheeks and a tender body is welcoming him. He enjoyed a serene kiss on his forehead.

“Five years ... I was waiting for you for the last five years. Finally, you came.”

A soft whisper turned into a zephyr in his ears. He wished to reply something. He wanted to open his eyes and to see the origin of the voice. Only he knew he was beyond any dreams.

That voice, he knew he was being vanquished by it.

At that moment there was a knock at the door. Even in his mild snooze he knew something moving away from him.

He took more time to rise up from the bed. He didn't want to.

He slowly walked towards the door and removed the lock. As he opened the door he saw a big crowd. He saw Naanu in between them.

"What happened?" He asked calmly.

"The rain and storm was heavy." Naanu said.

"So what?"

"This house is very old. It is incapable to withstand heavy rain." Someone in the crowd answered.

"But it is still unharmed."

"We saw light from afar. We just thought we will just check." Another person said. "No one has been using this house for last five years."

"It is so unusual to rain in this season." One person added.

Rajeev smiled at them.

"Did you have any difficulties?" Naanu's concerned enquiry came. Not only him but everyone can feel the uneasy stench coming from the house.

"No. Only problem is the dust but I will manage." Rajeev seemed unmoved of the stink.

Everyone was staring at him. Most of them felt that they have seen him before. They were trying to remember. This man, with unshaved face, long hair and his skinny body looked familiar. They were searching in their memories.

An old man in the group asked. "What is your name, son?"

His smile disappeared. Eyes were aglow with fire. Lips trembled. Like a whisper he uttered. "Rajeev."

The whole village was panicked.

This name was in the history of this village before five years. There wasn't fire with this name but love and compassion.

"No one should stand in this premise. Whoever will stay back will have to bear the consequences." Rajeev closed the door with a heavy thud.

The mob slowly moved away.

Atmosphere filled with their whisperings and thoughts.

"Look at him. He lost all his essence."

"He looks like a ghost"

"There is no doubt the storm came."

"What is in his mind?"

"Why did he come back?"

"He will destroy this village"

"How cannot he come back? She was waiting for him all these years."

"That's true, she made him come back."

"It seems the story will end today."

Only Naanu was left standing in front of the closed door. He stood there and stared. Then he also walked towards the crowd to hear what they have to say about him. He had too many questions to ask. The first was who is Rajeev?

Rajeev took a moment to calm him. He let out a long exhale. His eyes affixed on the bed where he lay earlier. He wanted the feeling to come back. *I can feel your presence, after all these years.*

Rajeev lay down again on the bed. Again he felt the same scent, an unearthly aroma of a lady. Once again the vastness of void surrounded him. Within seconds he was under a mild slumber.

“I was waiting for you.” He heard that serene sound near him. He heard the melody of glass bangles in the dark. He knew smooth touch of fingers on his chest.

“Why are you silent?”

I was waiting to hear this voice for last five years. His heart thumped with joy. And yet, he couldn't speak.

Those hands slowly moved up from his chest towards his neck.

He could feel something exploding in his veins. He could feel the rhythm of love in his heart. An unexplainable sensation enveloped his body. He has surrendered to the voice.

From his neck the fingers brushed his lips and breezed onto his hair.

He opened his mouth to say something. But the words were unvoiced.

Warm breaths fell on his face. A kiss rhymed on his lips. He was unable to move. He felt those lips moving all around his face like a fish. His face melted down in thousand kisses.

“Mridula.” In one of those moments he whispered. It resonated inside her ears. Her hands hold his head tight. Her

lips trembled over his lips in an unearthly kiss. A breeze of unquenchable thirst and desire embraced them.

"This moment ... I came back for this." He was free of his slumber. He could feel a female body veiled in transparent cloud over him. His hands slowly gripped around the form.

"We will be together forever." She whispered in his ears.

"Yes my love."

"Your body is mine, so is your soul."

He felt a zephyr blowing near his ears.

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Not too far away an infant screamed at an open ground. Heavy lightning struck at the centre of the ground and the soil split open and made a small opening. A tiny hand covered with blood and dirt slowly moved up. The scream became louder but was soon silenced by a horrific thunder.

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3

"I think I should be leaving now." Arun said.

"You are too drunk to drive." Alex tried to stop him. "I will come with you."

Arun laughed. "You are equally drunk as me. So don't act smart. And besides, you are a pathetic driver." He couldn't open his eyes fully and his steps were unsteady. But his ego stood taller among anything.

"Do whatever you want. But remember I stand steadier than you." Alex didn't like the insult.

"Come on, we will race. Let me see if you are steadier than me." He was not ready to back off.

"Get lost you jerk. Go and die, who cares." He went back inside the bar.

"Hey come here you coward." Arun shouted. "Come on, compete with me you gutless swine."

"Stop it you both. Why the hell do you always want to fight after drinking, Arun?" Shah asked. He gently hit him on his cheek.

"I ... didn't fight, that bugger started it all." Arun tried to defend himself.

"At least let me help you to the car." Mohan offered.

"No man. This is not the first time I am drinking. I can manage myself. You guys worry about that fool. He says he is steady but he is afraid to race with me. He is a loser." He teased Alex. Then he screamed. "Alex the loser, go and hide under some pretty girl's skirt." He laughed maniacally.

“You mother f***ing idiot I told you to leave. If you don’t go, I will punch you right on your face.” Alex said. He was still at the entrance.

“Stop please.” Shah was getting angry but he tried to regain himself. “Okay you leave now. See you tomorrow.”

Arun shook his head and slowly walked away with his wobbly steps. His movements were erratic but they knew once he reaches his car he will be fine. How much drunk he is, he will drive. He has met with few accidents but he is stubborn. He will continue to drive until death.

“Alex you are a coward.” He shouted in between. “You are a loser.”

“Come on, we can have another round before leaving.” Shah walked in front of them. They went inside the bar towards their table.

“No man, it’s already late. We should be going by now.” Mohan was in a hurry.

“There is always time for one last drink. We will leave at midnight and we have six more minutes.” Shah encouraged them.

They were friends from childhood. Every weekend they meet and drink and eat together. Once in two months they are go for some long drives and end up at Alex’s old estate at Munnar.

There, Alex’s estate manager, Maruthu, a ferocious guy would have arranged everything thing for them. Chicken, beef, pork, fish, specially made liquor and even ladies for entertainment. But this time they were in a bar.

Arun walked in an irregular pattern measuring every inch of the trail until he reached his car. He slipped near his car but luckily two hands supported him. He looked back. He

had to adjust his vision to see the person. A beautiful looking girl!

Where did she come from?

“Can I help you?” Her voice was sweet.

“How can I turn down an offer from a young beautiful girl?” He started flirting.

“Can I drive?” She asked.

“Of course you can. Consider it as yours.” He showed her the car keys.

She helped him inside the car and put on the seatbelt. Her breasts were purposely squeezed onto Arun and she knew he would definitely enjoy it.

She was attractive and young, maybe twenty or twenty-one. She wore a jeans and a top. She had thick bosom and Arun’s eyes were affixed on them. Her straightened brown hair had golden ends. She was slim with tantalizing features. Her voice was sweet. She looked like she was from a good family.

Who cares? Arun thought.

“Where do you want to go?” He asked.

“It is up to you. You tell me.” She smiled, beautiful, seductive smile. He saw her lips were wet.

Lusty dreams rise up inside him. *This is a golden chance. Why should I let it go? The earlier the better.* Suddenly a thought arose in his mind. *Why not here?*

The parking ground was empty save them. The watchman must be at the gate and no one would come here any time soon. Everything is perfectly in tune. The night is dark, the atmosphere is cool, and the ambience is silent and seductive.

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